

# The Gender Lenses of the Nanking Massacre and Its Aftermath to the China-Japan Relations

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## Abstrak

Hubungan antara China dan Jepang telah mengalami berbagai dinamika terutama berkaitan dengan insiden Pembantaian Nanking (1937) pada masa perang dunia kedua. Berawal dari Pembantaian Nanking, lalu China yang lebih berfokus pada permasalahan internal hingga China yang meminta pertanggung jawaban Jepang atas Pembantaian Nanking. Berikut pula Jepang yang mengakui hingga menolak tuduhan China. Dalam tulisan ini dibahas hubungan China-Jepang mulai dari Pembantaian Nanking dalam Perang Dunia kedua hingga bagaimana kedua negara bersikap atas sejarah mengenai perempuan tersebut melalui perspektif dan konsep dalam feminisme.

Keywords : Dinamika, feminisme, Hubungan China-Jepang, Pembantaian Nanking, sejarah

## The Nanking Massacre and Its Aftermath

In 1931, in the World War II era, the Japanese invaded the Chinese Manchuria. After six years of invasion, in 1937 the Japanese and Chinese troops went for a full scale war and as a result, on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1937, Nanking, the capital of Nationalist China fell to the Japanese.<sup>1</sup> During the invasion in Nanking, there were a great massacre and the existence of rape as a weapon of war. There were several versions of how many people were slain or raped, but according to BBC, between 250.000 until 300.000 people were killed and most of them were children and women.<sup>2</sup>

After the end of the World War II, the four major allied power, that consisted of France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union,

<sup>1</sup> Mary Linehan, *Encyclopedia of Rape*, Ed. Merril D. Smith, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004, p194-196.

<sup>2</sup>"Scarred by History : The Rape of Nanjing", *BBCNews*, April. 11, 2015, [http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/2\\_3\\_5.html](http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/2_3_5.html)



held an International Military Tribunal to prosecute and punish the war crime, war against peace, and crime against humanity which were done by the European Axis. In January 1946, Japan was also concluded in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), which was held in Tokyo. Nine senior Japanese Political Leaders and eighteen military leaders were impeach for the crime. While Japanese Emperor Hirohito and others imperial family were not accused for any single crime.<sup>3</sup>

a. Chinese Perspective

The issue of Nanking Massacre was forgotten by both Chinese and Japanese for about three decades, starting from 1940s-1970s. The Chinese people forgot the massacre, which was done by the Japanese Imperial Army, because after the end of the war, there was a civil war in China between the established Kuomintang Government, who was led by Chiang Kai-Sek, and the Communist Party. The established Government focused on the internal matter. The Government even refused to indict the Japanese that attacked the Northern China because the Northern China was occupied by the Communist.<sup>4</sup>

After the fall of the Kuomintang Government, in 1949, the Communist Party took over the leadership in People's Republic of China (PRC), and one of the government's agenda was finding the reason why Nanking Massacre had been neglected.<sup>5</sup> After the death of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping ruled the PRC in 1980s, he even stated that Japan owed more to China than to another country. China had changed the focus from internal matter to the promotion of nationalism using the Nanking Massacre and asking for the compensation.<sup>6</sup> The China's victimization was

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<sup>3</sup> "The Nuremberg Trial and the Tokyo War Crimes Trial (1945-1948)", *Office of Historian Department of States*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nuremberg>

<sup>4</sup> Josh Gordon, *The Nanking Massacre: Analysis of Japanese and Chinese Interpretation and Remembrance of Nanking 1940s-The Present*, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2014, P 3-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p 11.

<sup>6</sup> Caroline Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations Facing the Past, Looking for the future?*, New York : Routledge Curzon, 2005.



freely discussed and researched. Chinese nationalism referred to not only the glorious of Chinese Civilizations but also the Chinese Humiliation. In 1980s, China began to design the Nanking (or Nanjing) as a museum site to retrieve the death of 300.000 Chinese people. Then, China started to interview the victim of Nanking Massacre. In 1990s, China institutionalized a critical narrative of Japan's conduct in war to officially abandon Tokyo.<sup>7</sup> The participation of another actor, which was NGO, had occurred in 2014. An NGO in China demanded Japanese Government apologize for Nanking Massacre.<sup>8</sup> Besides the NGO, another actor such as Private-Sector Group in China also registered "comfort women" documents with UNESCO's Memory of the world.<sup>9</sup> In 2015, China criticized Japan as Japan apologize about the "comfort women" to South Korea, while leaving another countries, such as China, which were the victim of "comfort women" without the same treatment.<sup>10</sup> Thus, China assumed that Japan's apology was only to strengthen its relations with United States of America. And last in December 08, 2016, China again criticized Japan for not coming to memorable place, war-linked sites in China, such as Nanking, as Japan came to the Pearl Harbor.<sup>11</sup>

#### b. Japanese Perspective

Japanese was divided into two groups, the one which believed that Japan should take responsibility for Japan's action during Nanking Massacre and the

<sup>7</sup> "Special Report : How the Nanjing Massacre became a political tool", *Global Risk Insights*, Oct. 27, 2016, <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/10/how-nanjing-became-a-political-tool/>

<sup>8</sup> "China NGO asks Abe to apologize for Nanking Massacre, pay compensation", *Japan Times*, Dec. 8, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/08/national/china-ngo-asks-abe-to-apologize-for-nanking-massacre-pay-compensation/#.WGR5Dht97IU>

<sup>9</sup> "Press Conference by Foreign Minister Funio Kishida", *MOFA*, June. 02, 2016, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e\\_000274.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000274.html)

<sup>10</sup> Neil Connor, "Japan World War Two Comfort Women Apology Criticised in China", *The Telegraph*, Dec. 30, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/12073861/Japan-World-War-Two-comfort-women-apology-criticised-in-China.html>

<sup>11</sup> "China to Abe : We, too, have war-linked sites worth visiting", *The Japan Time*, Dec. 08, 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/12/08/national/politics-diplomacy/china-abe-war-linked-sites-worth-visiting/#.WGSC4ht97IU>



revisionists who believed that the massacre was a lie. In 1950s, Japan gained the support from the United States of America, then to control Communists threat, the Government of Japan decided to take over the textbook, omitting any material that criticized Japan, even the Nanking Massacre had gone from the books in Japan. Starting from 1960s, there were a lot of debates according to the Nanking Massacre in Japanese scholars. Thus in 1970s, the Nanking Massacre could be discovered again in the high school textbook, *Shin Nihon Shi*, which actually was rejected by the Ministry of Education. In 1980s, Japan realized that it was impossible to tone down the Nanking Massacre, besides, the revisionists even admitted that some killing in Nanking were true and the debates continued for more than a decade.<sup>12</sup> More over in 1990s, Japan clearly refused any moral judgements from China.<sup>13</sup> Again, in 2005, the Government of Japan approved the history book of Japan that ignored the atrocities of Japan in China during the World War II, then thousands of Chinese, the Anti-Japanese, protested in Japanese Embassy.<sup>14</sup> October 14, 2016, Japan withdrew its fund to UNESCO, as the issue of Nanking Massacre registered in Memory of the World Register Documents.<sup>15</sup> But then in this December, Japan decided to contribute again in UNESCO as the Nanking Massacre was under review.<sup>16</sup>

Japan did some efforts to take responsibility from Nanking Massacre such as Japan had actually given the compensation to China by giving accumulatively \$30 Billion through the aid program.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Japan had actually apologized to

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<sup>12</sup> Josh Gordon, *Op. Cit.*, p 16-22.

<sup>13</sup> "Special Report : How the Nanjing Massacre became a political tool", *Global Risk Insights*, Oct. 27, 2016. <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/10/how-nanjing-became-a-political-tool/>

<sup>14</sup> Jin Qiu, "The Politics of History and Historical Memory in China-Japan Relations." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 11 (2006): 25-53. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF02877032>. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/821689455?accountid=25704>.

<sup>15</sup> "Special Report : How the Nanjing Massacre became a political tool", *Global Risk Insights*, Oct. 27, 2016, <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/10/how-nanjing-became-a-political-tool/>

<sup>16</sup> "Kishida : Japan Paid dues to UNESCO this Month", *NHK World*, Dec. 22, 2016, [https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20161222\\_18/](https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20161222_18/)

<sup>17</sup> Eamon Fingleton, "The Untold Story of Japans War Compensation Record", May. 03, 2016, <http://www.fingleton.net/the-untold-story-of-japans-war-compensation-record/>



China in 1972.<sup>18</sup> But then the inconsistency of Japan itself made an uneasy relations, as an example, the statement of Prime Minister Abe that there was no evidence on World War II sex slaves.<sup>19</sup>

## Feminism

Feminism is a perspective of the international relations that emerges in 1990s. Feminism is often described as a perspective that only focuses on equality between sexes, especially for women. But, feminism is actually far beyond that definition. Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart argue that feminists are interested in the construction of genders in international relations, how actually the world is constructed by masculinity or femininity and how to bring women in international relations.<sup>20</sup>

Feminism aims to prove the existence of masculinity in the international relations and to reject that universal experiences. Feminists argue that the core assumptions of international relations are basically masculine bias as the theories and the concepts usually focus on the existence of state, sovereignty, military power, anarchy. Furthermore, feminism rejects the realist's view, the rational man, as it tends to lead human nature to self-serving, warlike, and aggressive.<sup>21</sup> The war could be seen as the masculine pursuit because, first, according to the anthropologists the combatants in warfare are usually men, and second, the male sex hormone

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<sup>18</sup> "Joint Communique of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China", *MOFA Japan*, Sept. 29, 1972, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint72.html>

<sup>19</sup> Hiroko Tabuchi, "Japan's Abe : No Proof of WW II Sex Slaves", *Washington Post*, Mar. 01, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/01/AR2007030100578.html>

<sup>20</sup> Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez, Imad El-Anis. *An Introduction to International Relations Theory Perspectives and Themes*. Third Edition. England: Pearson Education Limited. 2010. p 155-156.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke, Jim George, eds. *An Introduction to International Relations Australian Perspective*. Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. p 76-77



testosterone is often being connected by the hormone to lead the aggressiveness in the animals.<sup>22</sup>

Ann Tickner explains that feminism appreciates the feminists work on human connectedness, dialogue and cooperation. Feminists state that the core of security is not merely state-oriented, but it should be up to the degree of how security pay attention to the security of people, such as human rights abuse or violence. As the view of security in feminism is people oriented, the security of women is prioritized. Thus, V. Spike Peterson and Ann Sisson Runyan provide “the gender lenses” of international relations to discover aspects of international relations that are neglected by the meta-theories, such as realism or liberalism as feminism focuses on gender as central category analysis of international relations and on how discourses in international relations are gendered discourses.<sup>23</sup>

Maternal and Cultural Feminism is one of feminism’s branches of study, which is in contrast with liberal feminism as liberal feminism rejects that the nature of women is more peaceful. Maternal and Cultural Feminism argues that peace is related to women, that the natures of women, considering the usual role of women as a mother, such as mother like, caring, nurturing, are the core concepts which should be taken to grant the global peace.<sup>24</sup>

Critical and Postmodern Feminism states that gendered constructions are not only existed in individual but also in states, institutions, knowledge, and political discourses. Any institutions, knowledge, states will never be neutral as they do have the gender bias. Thus, the concerns of the critical and postmodern feminism are, first, those entities are basically value the masculinity and devalue femininity as they constructed the importance of states, military power, and devalue the ‘feminine values’ such as cooperation and dialogue. Second, the masculine agendas are being

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<sup>22</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse. *International Relations*. Sixth Edition. Pearson. 2014. P 98.

<sup>23</sup> Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez, Imad El-Anis, *Op.Cit.*, p 155-157.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke, Jim George, eds. *Op. Cit.*, p 82-83.



prioritized, such as the power of state, while the feminine agendas of international relations such as women are hardly seen. This branch of feminism seeks to improve the lives of whole human kind.<sup>25</sup>

## ANALYSIS

### a. The Nanking Massacre

The feminism perspective seeks to demonstrate the masculinity of the Nanking Massacre and to reject that bias. First of all The Nanking Massacre is state-oriented. It can be proven by the existence of the actors, the actors of this act are Japan and China, and both of them are states. Second, related to the sovereignty, Japan as the invader did the imperialism, while China, which was being invaded, tried to maintain its sovereignty with a counter-attack from Chinese troops. Further, Chiang Khai-Sek, ordered to hold the city at any cost despite of the fearful of losing the battle.<sup>26</sup> The condition indicates that sovereignty of state as the masculine agenda is still prioritized above the feminine agenda, human security, as Chiang order to hold the city at any cost.

Then, the rational man's natures, which consist of self-serving, aggressive, and war like refer to the massacre and the rape as weapon of war. The Japanese troops killed approximately hundreds of thousands people and as between 20.000-80.000 women were sexually assaulted.<sup>27</sup> The Nanking Massacre also can be depicted as part of the war, as it happened during the World War II, in which Japan was one of the actors. As it has been explained above that the war itself reflects the existence of gender bias towards masculinity related to the sex of the combatants which usually refer to men and the hormone that the men have. Moreover, the victims of this

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p 83-84.

<sup>26</sup> "Nanjing Massacre", *History*, <http://www.history.com/topics/nanjing-massacre>.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



Nanking Massacre are mostly women and children, the condition represent the absence of women security.

Fourth, the existence of the war itself, neglects the human security, because the actors of the Nanking Massacre are states, they have the bigger possibility to have the state-oriented security not human security. The declination of human security indicates the refusal of feminine value. The lack of human security can be proven by the high amount of victims and furthermore in this Nanking Massacre, the human feeling was neglected. The refusal of human feeling showed in the example of Wen Sunshi, one of the survivors, who was threatened by the Japanese troops as they forced her to be raped or else she will be killed.<sup>28</sup>

Fifth, the military power, which reflects the masculinity, used in the Nanking Massacre can be depicted by the existence of Japanese Imperialism Army, the use of guns to threaten the other people.<sup>29</sup> The use of hard power itself is restricted by the feminists, as the in the feminism perspective the soft power should be prioritized such as the effort of having dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation.

According to maternal and cultural feminism, the Nanking Massacre lacks of women's natures which consist of peacefulness, mother like, and moral. The lack of the women's nature can be seen as the existence of war itself. Because according to the anti-war propaganda, the war is immoral.<sup>30</sup> While on the other side, according to the critical and postmodern feminism, the entities that are involved in the Nanking Massacre are contradictory with the improving the lives of the whole human kind. How could a human's live being improved if the live itself is threatened or ended forcefully?

#### b. The Aftermath of the Nanking Massacre

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<sup>28</sup> "I Will Never Forget : Voices of Survivors", *Facing History and Ourselves*, <https://www.facinghistory.org/nanjing-atrocities/atrocities/i-will-never-forget-voices-survivors>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>30</sup> Orrin Schwab, *A Clash of Cultures Civil-Military Relations during the Vietnam War*, (London: Praeger Security International, 2006), p 131.





The China-Japan relations after the Nanking Massacre can be seen as a mixture of masculinity and femininity. First of all, the actors that are involved in the aftermath of Nanking Massacre are not only states, but also the NGO and the private sector. The Feminism perspective refuses the idea of state-oriented actor. Thus, the existence of non-state actors can represent the feminism perspective.

Second, the mixture of the masculinity and femininity are depicted in the use of both hard and soft power. The hard power in this era doesn't consist of the military power. The hard power occurs in economic diplomacy in the withdrawal of Japan's funding to UNESCO. While the soft power is shown in the economic diplomacy using the foreign aid from Japan to China as the compensation for the Nanking Massacre.

Third, after the Nanking Massacre, both states still maintain their masculinity by keeping their own sovereignty in the anarchy system. It can be showed by how Japan withdraw the funds to UNESCO, as the Nanking Massacre is registered in UNESCO Memory of the World Register Documents and how Japan could take control of the contents of the textbooks, even though another entities hold protests to Japan. Those give the evidence about masculinity as the state still have their own sovereignty and there is no such entity that could actually be above the state.

According to the maternal and cultural feminism, women peacefulness can be seen differently on how we define the peace itself. As for the definition of negative peace, it is true that China and Japan are in peace, because there is no violence and war between the China and Japan. But then, if the definition of peace is the positive peace which means the integration of human society, we can not conclude that the Japanese and the Chinese integrated well.<sup>31</sup> Those societies are not integrated well because according to the survey that was held by CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Science) in 2002, only 5,9% of Chinese respondents believed that Japan and China are close, while 43,3% respondents believed that Japan and China are not close.

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<sup>31</sup> Baljit Singh Grewal, "Johan Galtung : Positive and Negative Peace", Aug. 30, 2003, [http://www.activeforpeace.org/no/fred/Positive Negative Peace.pdf](http://www.activeforpeace.org/no/fred/Positive%20Negative%20Peace.pdf)



Besides, *Yomiuri Shimbun* survey showed that 55% Japanese respondents believed that Chinese people are unreliable.<sup>32</sup>

The economic diplomacy that is used by Japan to UNESCO, shows that it has the tendency of masculinity, because the withdrawal of the funding indicates that it is contradictory with the improvement the lives of whole human kind. How can a state helps to improve the lives of whole human kind if it withdraws its funding because of a political reason? Or else, considering the perspective of Chinese people which is Anti-Japanese, how can we improve the lives of whole human kind in term of the integration?

## CONCLUSION

Japan-China relations can be analyzed with the gender lenses. Japan-China relations are considered having the tendency of masculinity, although the femininity values are implemented in some parts of the bilateral relations, through the gender lenses. The era of Nanking Massacre itself shows the bigger tendency of masculinity than the aftermath era of Nanking Massacre, considering the actors, the natures, the orientation of security, the use of power, the perspective of maternal and cultural feminism, and critical and postmodern feminism.

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<sup>32</sup> Jin Qiu, *Op. Cit.*, p 3.



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